



# *Milwaukee County*

## Board of Supervisors

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For Immediate Release

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### **BOARD MEMBERS PUSH TO PRESERVE AND PROTECT COUNTY SERVICES**

#### *Hope for positive outcome with AFSCME Union*

Milwaukee, WI – Preserving County-provided services is a priority in the 2007 County Budget adopted by Supervisors this week. Board members say they've done all they possibly can in restoring positions to the budget with limited funding. Although the County and AFSCME are currently in arbitration, Board members remain hopeful an agreement can be reached so the positions providing key services can be permanently restored.

The County's Labor Negotiator position has been vacant since April, and the County Executive has not yet hired a replacement. "But the Board is doing its best to come up with a positive solution for at least 127 AFSCME Union represented positions in the Public Works and Parks Departments, to maintain our parks and keep County buildings safe and clean," said Board Chairman Lee Holloway. Supervisors voted unanimously to restore these positions after they were cut in the County Executive's Recommended Budget, but due to fiscal restraints, the positions are not fully funded for 2007.

The Board has a firm position: A new labor agreement with the union must be approved to protect these signature County services of parks maintenance, building security, and upkeep. "As the Personnel Committee Chairman, I'm disappointed that the County and the largest union were unable to come to a contract solution. Now we're in arbitration," said Supervisor Jim "Luigi" Schmitt. "But, I and the entire County Board remain hopeful that an agreement can be reached so these County-provided services can be saved."

The County is still waiting for AFSCME to review the wage and benefit proposal submitted to them. It includes the same health care benefits already approved for other union and non-union employees, as well as retirees.

During budget deliberations, a majority of Supervisors resisted attempts to outsource County services, including building security, maintenance, and cleaning services. Supervisor Richard Nyklewicz, Jr., Chairman of the County Board Finance Committee, said, "The County Executive has presented no basis for his projected savings from contracting services. No bids or requests for proposals were issued on which to base cost savings estimates. If we would have contracted out, we would have had no idea would it would cost us." Nyklewicz added, "The savings projected by the County Executive are overstated. County fringe benefit costs include pension and health care liabilities for retirees. A significant portion of these costs budgeted for 2007 would not go away if these services were outsourced."

The County Board adopted its 2007 Budget Monday, and will vote on any vetoes from the County Executive on Wednesday, November 15<sup>th</sup>, 1:30pm, in Room 200 of the Milwaukee County Courthouse.

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